

APPEAL	NABC+ NINE
Subject	Unauthorized Information (UI)
DIC	Henry Cukoff
Event	Blue Ribbon Pairs
Session	Second Qualifying
Date	November 27, 2007

BD#	7
VUL	Both
DLR	South

Tadashi Yoshida	
♠	Q J 7
♥	J 7 4 2
♦	5
♣	Q 8 7 5 3

Lew Stansby		Fall 2007 San Francisco, CA	Joanna Stansby	
♠	A T 2		♠	8 4
♥	8 5 3		♥	T 9 6
♦	A K 9 7		♦	J T 8 6 4 3
♣	J 4 2		♣	A K

Melody Bi	
♠	K 9 6 5 3
♥	A K Q
♦	Q 2
♣	T 9 6

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass ¹	Pass
Dbl	Pass	3♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Final Contract	3♦ by E
Opening Lead	♥A
Table Result	Made 3, E/W +110
Director Ruling	3♦ E +3, E/W +110
Committee Ruling	2♠ S +3, N/S +140

(1) Agreed break in tempo (BIT) of 8-15 seconds.
--

The Facts: The director was called after the play. The deal occurred near the end of the session. Two players were consulted as to their actions with the West hand. Both said they would double.

The Ruling: The director deemed that pass was not a logical alternative (LA); therefore, the table result of 3♦ making three, E/W plus 110 was allowed to stand.

The Appeal: Only North and South were present. N/S explained that they believed that they considered pass extremely logical, and they had asked many top players about the hand and they agreed. The appeals committee asked why the director was called only after the end of play and N/S explained that they were not sure when would have been the appropriate time to call.

The Decision: The committee discounted the N/S testimony regarding players they had consulted because of the many impairments to credibility of this type of evidence. We did, however, determine that pass was clearly logical. To paraphrase Kaplan, pass would not be an egregious error, in fact, it would be right quite often. The tournament director (TD) stopped his poll much too soon. If half would take one action and half another then ruling "There was no LA." after polling only two players risks a poor ruling 25% of the time.

By the numbers: Was there UI? Yes. Did the UI demonstrably suggest the action chosen (double) over a less successful alternative (Pass)? Yes. Would the less successful action have been logical? Yes. We then moved on to 12C2 to adjust the score. It looked to us as though 2♠ should be held to two for NS +110 on routine defense. We weren't certain, though, that the defense would be found, and we wouldn't want to give the offenders the benefit of the doubt so we asked a TD to look up the frequencies that occurred in the Blue Ribbon sessions. We were surprised to learn that N/S went +140 substantially more often than they went +110. We thus judged that N/S +140 was both the most favorable result that was likely for N/S absent the illegal double and also the most unfavorable result for E/W that was at all probable. Therefore, the committee adjusted the result to 2♠ making three, N/S plus 140 and E/W minus 140.

The appeal was judged to have merit.

The committee did not issue a procedural penalty against E/W. West must have considered balancing automatic. Had he thought it was at all close he'd surely have passed as a matter of self-interest, knowing that his side would keep a poor result and lose the benefit of any good result.

The Committee: Adam Wildavsky (Chair), Laurie Kranyak and Bob White.

Commentary:

Goldsmith Very nice write-up. Good decision.

Polisner How is it possible that the director (or presumably the director's staff) found that pass was not a LA? Did they poll any peers? I think that they may have been influenced by the celebrity of the E/W pair in making the ruling. This appeals committee (AC) did a good job in adjusting the table result. However, it does appear that even the AC took the West's celebrity into account in not issuing a procedural penalty (PP).

Rigal I'm very surprised by the initial tournament director ruling; a cursory glance at the result slips on the board would have shown that passing 2♠ might have been the majority action. A good AC overturn, and the work done to establish tricks taken was also repaid. In context no PP was surely right. An action deemed automatic at first hearing can't be subject to PP -- no matter who West is.

Smith I think the directors got this one wrong, and the committee corrected it. The opinions of the committee members establish pass as a logical alternative, and I agree with their line of reasoning in all other respects.

Wildavsky It's a shame NABC+ case eight was decided as it was. There would have been a nice symmetry in adjusting the result to 2♠ in one case and 3♦ in the other. That would illustrate the way the laws treat those who violate them, giving players a strong incentive to follow the laws while still allowing adjustment only in cases where an infraction leads to damage.

Wolff Excellent ruling.